

ing classes, — publicly complimented him. Truth to tell, he now read a great deal, even in class time, still devouring the poets, but finding a delight also in Eabelais, Montaigne, and other prose authors. And he carried on an interminable correspondence with his friends in Provence, at times addressing them in verse, at others launching into discussions on philosophy, morals, and aesthetics. It was now, too, that he wrote *Ms tale*, "La E<3e Amoureuse," which was therefore the earliest of his "Contes k Ninon," in which volume it afterwards appeared. Thus, in spite of his declared preference for a scientific career, his literary bent was steadily asserting itself.

At the end of *Ms* school year his only award was a second prize for French composition. Nevertheless, his mother, having scraped a little money together, allowed *Mm* to go to Provence for the vacation, which he spent with Bailie and C&anne. But on coming back to Paris in October he fell ill with a mucous fever of such severity that more than once a fatal issue was feared. "When, after a period of convalescence, he returned to St. Louis, there entering the rhetoric class, two months had been lost and he still felt weak. Thus, though his new master, M. Lalanne, commended some of his work, notably his compositions, his

progress was  
not great, particularly as his mind turned so  
frequently to  
Provence and his friends there, and hesitated  
"between the  
scientific avocations of his choice and an  
increasing ambition  
to become a poet. "When, however, the school  
year ended  
in August, 1859, his mother's position being as  
precarious as  
ever, he resolved to make an effort. He would  
skip the  
philosophy class and at once offer himself as  
a candidate  
for the degree of bachelor in sciences — that,  
or a corre-  
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